

This Week in Congress

October 27, 2008

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." Congress is out of session which has allowed me to travel extensively across Kansas this past week. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Presenting Medals to WWII POW Boyd Fox

I joined family and friends of World War II veteran Boyd Fox this week and along with the Plains Elementary students and faculty, we held a presentation honoring him for his service. Mr. Fox served our country in World War II and was a prisoner of war for five months after he and his crew were forced to bail out of their plane following a successful mission. Mr. Fox had never formally received the military medals recognizing his service and capture.

My office was able to successfully track down the deserved medals, after being contacted by Mr. Fox's daughter, Lana Miller.

I joined Mr. Fox's wife, Margaret, in presenting him with the Good Conduct Medal, the Air Medal, the European/African/Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the WWII Victory Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the Prisoner of War Medal and an Honorable Service Lapel Button.

I am proud of the service Mr. Fox gave to our country and was honored to have the opportunity to present him with his medals. The 5th grade class sang, "America," to honor Mr. Fox and the local Daughters of the American Revolution presented him with a certificate. Thank you to Principal Kyle Griffiths for hosting the event and for making it a priority that Plains Elementary students learn the sacrifices of our military.

[Click here](#)

to view photos from the event.

Touring Kansas Businesses

Dolly Madison in Emporia: On Tuesday, I toured Dolly Madison in Emporia to learn more about the plant and its bakery operation. The company is owned by Interstate Bakeries Corporation and currently employs 619 people in Emporia. During my visit, I received an update on the company's recovery from Chapter 11 bankruptcy declared in 2004. I discussed the country's current financial situation with company staff and managers and the possible effects it may have in Kansas.

Thanks to Dan Yust, the bakery unit controller, for giving me the tour. Also thanks to Rayna Bush, bakery human resources manager; Mayor Bob Agler; City Commissioner Jim Kessler; and City Manager Matt Zimmerman for accompanying me.

Wilkens Manufacturing, Inc., in Liberal: On Wednesday, I toured Wilkens Manufacturing, Inc., in Liberal, which is their newest Kansas expansion. During the tour, I learned that Wilkens Manufacturing has been providing the transportation industry with trailer services for the past 30 years, in three different locations. This location employs 35 people who build new trailers, repair trailers and sell parts. Wilkens Manufacturing occupies the former Trailmobile building in Liberal.

During the visit, I had the opportunity to meet with plant manager, Tim Johnson and discussed with him their recent business and their new facility. We were also joined by other employees and city officials including Mayor Joe Denoyer, City Commissioner Dave Harrison, Economic Development Director Colleen Towns and City Manager Mark Hall. We also had a good discussion about agriculture, education and the recent condition of the economy. [Click here](#) to view photos from my visit.

American Maplan Corp. in McPherson: In McPherson Friday, I visited American Maplan Corporation, which designs and manufactures screws and barrels for use by plastics processors. American Maplan is an example of a Kansas company providing innovative and needed services to businesses around the country while keeping Kansans employed. After touring the facility, I spoke with employees and answered questions about the economy.

Thanks to President and CEO Kurt Waldhauer; Chief Financial Officer Jim Silver; Chris Brown, Senior Director of Federal Government Affairs with the Society of the Plastics Industry; Marvin Peters, with the McPherson Industrial Development Company; Jennifer Burch, with the McPherson Chamber of Commerce; and McPherson City Administrator Gary Meagher.

Lyons Salt Company: I visited Lyons Salt Company in Lyons on Friday to meet with company leaders and tour the facility, which employs around 50 people. The salt mined at this facility is used in various applications and the company supports a packaging operation as well as bulk loading and trucking service. Last year, the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration and the National Mining Association awarded the company with the Sentinels of Safety award for its outstanding safety record in 2006. I appreciated the opportunity to learn more about this company, the work they do in Kansas and the opportunities for employment the company provides. Thanks to Executive Vice President of Operations Ken Grimm, General Manager Nathan Steele and Shannon Young with the Lyons Chamber of Commerce.

Visiting Kansas Community Hospitals

Ulysses Hospital and Stanton County Hospital: I stopped on Friday in Ulysses and Johnson City to meet with hospital officials and local leaders to learn about the successes and challenges specific to their respective hospitals. Both facilities are critical access hospitals which provide excellent care to our rural communities. I am always impressed with the dedication and professional care administered in these facilities that operate under difficult conditions.

Thank you to Shae Veach, administrator at the Stanton County Hospital, and Robert Ohlen, administrator at the Bob Wilson Memorial Hospital in Ulysses for taking the time to visit with me about their facilities and efforts to provide high quality, rural health care. I also had the opportunity to meet Daron Hall, the new city administrator for Ulysses, and welcome him to Kansas. [Click here](#) to view photos of my visits.

Ellinwood Hospital: On Friday, I visited Ellinwood District Hospital in Ellinwood. This 25-bed facility is one of the 75 hospitals in the First Congressional District of Kansas. Access to hospitals and health care providers is necessary for our small towns to continue to survive. Ellinwood District Hospital helps meet these needs for residents in Barton County. I appreciated the opportunity to return to Ellinwood District Hospital and visit with Hospital Administrator Joyce Schulte.

Visiting with Kansas Students

This week, I visited with students at several Kansas schools. I met with students at Emporia State University, Emporia Christian School, Council Grove High School and Elkhart High School. I spoke with the students about my responsibilities as an elected official, the presidential election and the current condition of our economy. I encouraged those who may be newly eligible voters to exercise their rights on November 4, 2008. I told the students that I voted against the \$700 billion bailout package, two times, in part because of its extraordinary cost to them and the risk it places on our future generations. The package will increase our nation's debt to \$11.3 trillion.

I appreciate the members of the Dean's Council at Emporia State University for meeting with me. Thanks to Tes Mehring, Betsy Yanik, Gwen Alexander, Steve Brown, Gary Bleeker, Joyce Davis, Ken Weaver, Joseph Wen and Mike Erickson.

Thank you to Jim Sanborn for giving me a tour of Emporia Christian School. Emporia Christian School was founded in 1992 and currently serves more than 25 different churches to provide a faith-centered elementary education to the Emporia community. The school has 100 students, which includes preschool and kindergarten classes, up through eight grade.

I also appreciated the opportunity to speak with Jay Doornbos's American Government classes at Council Grove High School. Thanks to Kelly McDiffett, the principal at Council Grove High School. On Thursday, I visited Elkhart High School to visit with the senior class. I appreciated the hospitality of Social Studies teachers Josh Flanagan and Travis Dixon. [Click here](#) to view photos of my visits.

Attending Kansas Community Meetings

Dodge City Lions Club: On Wednesday, I joined the Dodge City Lions Club for their weekly meeting. I enjoyed meeting with their members and discussing the latest events in Dodge City. I shared with them my thoughts about recent activity in Washington, D.C. I enjoyed my time with fellow Lions. Thank you to District Governor John Lee, President Russell Gall and Vernon Everhart for their hospitality.

Rotary Club: I attended the Rotary Club meeting on Monday in Overland Park. I enjoy having the opportunity to talk with community leaders about the issues that are making an impact in their areas. Thank you to Greg Musil for inviting me to attend. Also thanks to Jeff Goodman, the Rotary Club president and members of the American Stroke Foundation who attended the meeting.

Learning about New Developments at the KU Medical Center

I visited the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City on Monday to learn about exciting developments that will help cancer patients, support research and create jobs. Dr. Scott Weir briefed me on the development of a new cancer treatment created by faculty at the KU Medical Center. Researchers reformulated a commonly-used drug used to treat ovarian cancer in such a way that they believe it will boost survival rates and cause fewer painful side effects for patients. According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 15,500 deaths will occur this year from ovarian cancer. The new drug developed at KU holds promise to bring these numbers down. The discovery and testing of the new drug is also an important step for the KU Medical Center toward meeting criteria for obtaining designation as a National Cancer Institute.

While at the KU Medical Center, I also learned about the Lawrence Regional Life Sciences Incubator. This \$8 million research facility will provide lab space for researchers whose research has the potential to be turned into commercial ventures. Together with the city of Lawrence, KU hopes the new facility will create new companies, recruit and retain faculty and create jobs. Before leaving, I had the opportunity to learn about additional research being done at the KU Medical Center that is funded by the National Institutes of Health. Thanks to Keith Yehle, director of government relations at the University of Kansas, for setting up the visit. [Click here](#) to view photos from my time at the KU Medical Center.

Attending annual Parent-Teacher-Friends Soup Supper at Thomas More Prep-Marian in Hays

On -Sunday, I attended the annual Parent-Teacher-Friends (PTF) Soup Supper at Thomas More Prep-Marian in Hays. Proceeds from the soup supper support PTF projects. Thank you to the school for allowing me the pleasure to join in this great event. Also, thank you to the cooks for the great meal.

Watching Kansas State University Football

On Saturday, I was able to attend the Kansas State University football homecoming game against Oklahoma. Our state is fortunate to have many great institutions of higher learning, and I always enjoying the talking with and visiting with the students who make up these great colleges and universities. Thank you to KSU President Jon Wefald and his wife, Ruth Ann, for inviting me to attend.

In The Office:

Several Kansans were in this week for a tour of the United States Capitol, including Eric Reid, Julie Wright, Marilyn Huslig, Joy Conrad and Judy Brown of Ellsworth. Also in for a tour were Judy Gephardt and Kendra Ploutz of Kanapolis, Beth Shearer of Salina and Patrick Shearer of Virginia Beach, Virginia. Ron and Lisa Frank, Charles Dodge, Brian Crawford and Elton Crawford of Salina; Lynn and Carla Stucky of Pretty Prairie and Ken and Mary Kreif of Derby also received tours this week.

Very truly yours,

Jerry